Grade 3 Sample Items –Passage #1

Today you will research two people who lived long ago. As you read these passages, you will gather information and answer questions. Then you will write an article for your school newspaper to teach your classmates about how these two people made a difference in America.

Read the excerpt from a book titled *Eliza's Cherry Trees: Japan's Gift to America* about a young woman who lived in Washington, D.C., in the 1800s. Then answer the questions.

Excerpt from *Eliza's Cherry Trees: Japan's Gift to America*

By Andrea Zimmerman

1 When she was twenty-six, Eliza bought tickets to faraway Alaska. Few tourists had ever been there. Eliza wrote reports for the newspapers back home. She loved sharing the fascinating things she saw, such as huge glaciers, spouting whales, and the native people. Eliza even wrote a book—the first guidebook about Alaska.

2 When Eliza went back to Washington, it wasn't long before she started thinking about traveling again. She decided to visit her older brother, who was working in Japan. Eliza sailed across the ocean.

3 In Japan, she rode on trains, carriages, and bumpy rickshaws. She climbed mountains, ate strange foods, and visited ancient temples. Everything was so different! She studied Japanese art and learned to speak Japanese. She fell in love with Japan and its people.

4 Eliza especially loved Japanese gardens. Eliza's favorite plants, by far, were the Japanese cherry trees. Eliza called them "the most beautiful thing in the world." Thousands of the trees were planted in parks and along the riverbanks. When they bloomed, the trees

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became clouds of pink blossoms. As the petals drifted down, it was like pink snowfall. The Japanese people loved the cherry trees as their national symbol. Crowds gathered for picnics under the trees. People wrote poems and painted pictures to honor those *sakura*.

5 When Eliza came back home, she wrote a book about Japan. She wanted to share her love of Japan with other Americans. She wanted the nations of Japan and America to be friends.

6 Even though she was always thinking about her next journey, Eliza loved coming home to Washington, D.C. She was proud of America's growing capital and wanted it to look as beautiful as any city in the world.

7 She thought about the muddy land from a recent construction project in the swampy area around the riverbank. Eliza had a wonderful idea. She remembered the beautiful cherry trees in Japan. She thought, "That's what Washington needs!"

8 Eliza told the man in charge of the Washington parks about the wonderful cherry trees. She showed him photographs that she had taken. She told him about her plan to plant hundreds of cherry trees down by the water. He said no. He believed that they didn't need any different kind of tree in Washington.

9 But Eliza knew that sometimes when you have a good idea, you have to keep trying. So she waited. When a new parks man was hired, she told him about her good idea. He, too, said no.

10 Eliza kept traveling. She also met with friends who loved to travel. Some of these friends had started the National Geographic Society. The society was for people who wanted to learn more about the world.

11 Eliza was the first woman to have an important job there, and she helped the society grow. She wrote many articles and books. Eliza made more trips to Japan, Alaska, and Europe, and she explored India, China, Russia, and Java, an island of Indonesia.

12 Eliza also became a photographer. Not many women did that, either. She took pictures for the Smithsonian Institution and recorded people and places that Americans had never seen.

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13 But Eliza didn't forget about the cherry trees, and she didn't give up. She kept trying for more than twenty years! Every time a new man was hired to be in charge of the parks department, Eliza went to tell him about her idea. Each one said no.

14 In 1909, William Howard Taft had just been elected president. Eliza had another good idea. She knew that sometimes people in politics could help get things done. She wrote a letter to the president's wife, Mrs. Taft. Eliza told Mrs. Taft about her plan to make Washington more beautiful with the lovely cherry trees. She was afraid the answer would be no again.

15 But Mrs. Taft loved the idea! With the help of Mr. Takamine, a generous Japanese scientist, they had the trees sent from Japan.

16 Everyone was happily waiting for the trees to arrive. Eliza imagined the beautiful pink clouds of blossoms that would soon be blooming in Washington.

17 In January of 1910, two thousand cherry trees arrived. They were given as a gift from Japan's capital city, Tokyo. But there was a problem. The trees had diseases and bugs. The inspectors were afraid they would make American trees sick. The president agreed. He signed an order for all the cherry trees to be burned to ashes.

18 Eliza was so disappointed. She was also afraid that the Japanese people would be offended. But the mayor of Tokyo said they understood. He even joked about George Washington chopping down a cherry tree.

19 New trees were carefully grown in Japan. In March of 1912, three thousand new trees arrived. They were inspected and declared healthy!

20 On March 27, 1912, there was a small ceremony at the planting of the first two cherry trees. Eliza watched as her longtime dream was finally coming true.

21 Over the years, the trees grew, and every spring, they bloomed. People began gathering to enjoy them and to celebrate their beauty, just like in Japan. Eliza was happy to see how they helped turn Washington, D.C., into one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

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